

ARRESTS

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District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said Ferns, who is being held in lieu of \$235,000 bail, was arraigned Thursday on seven counts:

- Unlawful manufacturing of more than 8 grams of methamphetamine
- Unlawful possession of more than 10 grams of methamphetamine
- Unlawful delivery of more than 10 grams of methamphetamine
- Unlawful manufacturing of psilocybin mushrooms
- Unlawful possession of psilocybin mushrooms
- Unlawful delivery of psilocybin mushrooms
- Unlawful possession of 12 grams or more of psilocybin mushrooms

Owens is being held in lieu of \$190,000 bail, Shirtcliff said.

She was arraigned on four charges Thursday:

- Unlawful delivery of methamphetamine
- Unlawful manufacturing of methamphetamine
- Unlawful delivery of more than 10 grams of psilocybin mushrooms
- Unlawful possession of



Baker City Police Department photo

Police found large amounts of various chemicals in a Baker City apartment where they arrested two people Wednesday on charges of manufacturing methamphetamine.

psilocybin mushrooms

Shirtcliff said a grand jury will be convened to consider other charges against Ferns and Owens, including whether the crimes took place within 1,000 feet of a school. The apartment house is in the vicinity of both South Baker Intermediate School and Baker Middle School.

Shirtcliff said Ferns has moved to recuse Judge Greg Baxter from sitting on his case. Ferns is scheduled to appear in court to enter a plea on Feb. 27.

Owens, who did not ask for

Baxter to be removed from her case, is scheduled to enter a plea in court on March 4, Shirtcliff said.

Newman said the apartment building was evacuated because of the danger posed to occupants by the drug lab.

The initial entry team decontaminated themselves at the Baker City Fire Department where they showered and washed their clothing and cleaned their equipment.

Ferns and Owens were taken first to St. Alphonsus Medical Center to be decontaminated before they

"I haven't seen a fully operational lab like this in a long time."

— **Dustin Newman,**
Baker City Police Chief

were taken to the jail. Baker County Emergency Management also provided a mobile decontamination unit, Newman said.

A trained Oregon State Police clandestine laboratory team was contacted and responded to Baker City, from various areas, including Salem, Medford, Bend and Pendleton, Newman said. The team completed the search of the apartment using specialized safety equipment.

A hazardous material disposal company with representatives from Kennewick, Washington, and Philomath responded to remove the dangerous materials and properly dispose of them. The operation and cleanup was completed about 4 a.m. Thursday, Newman said.

At this time the apartment has been posted with placards stating it is unlawful for anyone to inhabit the premises due to the operation of an illegal drug manufacturing laboratory and health

concerns for anyone who might occupy the residence. Those who do not obey the posting could be charged with first-degree criminal trespassing, Newman said.

He said it will be up to Health Department officials to determine whether the entire apartment building will be posted or just the apartment where Ferns and Owens lived.

Richard Torrance of Baker City owns the apartment complex, according to Baker County Assessor's Office records. As the owner, Torrance will be responsible for following a standard procedure to make sure the location is properly sanitized and the risk of a dangerous exposure is nullified, Newman said. Calls to Torrance and to the Health Department were not returned in time for this story.

Members of the cleanup team said the cost could be as much as \$30,000, Newman said.

Newman and Shirtcliff pointed to the decline in meth labs since 2006 when Oregon became the first state to require a prescription for formerly over-the-counter cold and allergy medicines containing pseudoephedrine and ephedrine.

Even the out-of-town visitors who helped with the case were surprised by the size of the lab, Newman said.

"They said ours was one of the biggest ones they've seen," he said. "It was hard for me to believe when I saw it. Probably right there was one of the biggest I've ever seen."

"I haven't seen a fully operational lab like this in a long time," Newman said.

Sportsman's Club meets

Powder River Sportsman's Club, 2690 Broadway St., will have its monthly meeting on Monday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m.

The Club's monthly meeting will revert to its regular schedule, the first Tuesday of each month, in March.

On Feb. 5 at 6:30 p.m. there will be a special meeting at the Club to discuss plans for the Youth Hunter Education Challenge.

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I'm Nala Boo Boo, a 3.5 year old spayed female Chihuahua/Pitbull Mix. I'm 35 pounds, and about a year ago I hurt myself falling out of a pickup truck. My leg and hip are all healed up now! I'm very active and love water - but snow not so much... I have lived with other dogs and a big cat, but I'm a little overwhelmed around noisy toddlers. Oh, and I'm not a barker!

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MEASLES

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"I think that's reassuring for people, if they've only had one dose," Dr. Logan Clausen, a COPA pediatrician, said. "The chance of that one dose working is really high."

The clinic typically gives the second dose when the child turns 2.

"We give it on the early end because it's a pretty aggressive disease and we've seen outbreaks in California," Clausen said.

Many parents are contacting the clinic to see if they can get the second dose even earlier. Children can receive the second dose earlier than two years as long as there is a 28-day period between the first and second doses.

Since the start of the outbreak in Clark County, which is just over the state border-line from Portland, COPA has been screening callers to the nurse line for measles symptoms and vaccination status. They have yet to identify any suspected cases among their patients.

"I think the really hard part about the timing of this measles outbreak is we're still in the middle of winter sick season," Clausen said. "A lot of the symptoms are going to look like the other common viruses going around."

Measles typically starts with a fever and fatigue, progressing to a cough, congestion, red eyes and runny nose.

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